



Tom Sanford, *Saints of the Lower East Side*, 2012. Photo credit: <http://fabnyc.org/>

Urban Core Project: Living Arts City

UURB 3032, CRN 8168, Fall 2012

Fridays, 12:10 pm - 2:50 pm

66 W12th Street, Room 617

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Office hours by appointment only

What are the enabling factors for the “living arts” in neighborhoods that are undergoing major transitions? How do local stakeholders integrate arts and cultural development, social and environmental justice, and equitable development? How can design processes facilitate a vision of change that empowers neighborhood actors?

This is a project-based course for advanced undergraduate students from multiple disciplines. It offers unique opportunities for students to work with community-based organizations through a partnership with the citywide “Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts” working group (NOCD-NY) nocdny.org. Through site visits, case studies, social research, cultural analysis, and design process, students will apply tools, methods, and approaches learned from the classrooms to address real-world issues for site partners around New York City.

Project statement and site partners:*

Each NOCD-NY site partner has a distinct identity because of its strong relationships with local actors as a hub, forming a cluster of social, artistic, cultural, economic, and environmental activities. The overarching question that Living Arts City will examine this semester is:

How can we make a NOCD “visible”?

Since the context, constituents, local capacity and priorities of each site partner vary greatly, strategies to address the issue of “visibility” will be different in each site. This project-based course is set up so that students will have opportunities to tailor project proposals and implement research and design in collaboration with NOCD-NY and some of its members:*

- El Museo del Barrio, East Harlem
- The Point Community Development Corporation, Hunts Point
- Chinatown History Project, Chinatown

*Development of this project-based course is supported by a mini-grant from Eugene Lang College’s Civic Engagement and Social Justice Committee.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to:

- Identify elements of arts and culture in an urban system, focusing on neighborhood-level actors and processes in an asset-based framework
- Expand and enhance skills in spatial analysis, social research, and graphic communication through fieldwork and assignments
- Practice active citizenship by applying classroom learning and studio practice in real world settings in collaboration with community partners
- Develop communication, collaboration, organization and time management skills by working in multi-disciplinary teams in a project cycle
- Become familiar with project evaluation and monitoring procedures through individual and group reflections

Course requirements and Grading

This course is organized around academic service learning in partnership with community-based organizations. As such, active and engaged participation throughout the semester is imperative to meet the basic requirements for the course.

Between 3 to 5 students will work in teams to tailor the deliverables according to their collective capacity and to the opportunities and constraints of each site. The final projects could be a cultural assets assessment, a design proposal, or a pilot project.

- Attendance, readings and weekly reflections – 25%
- Assignment 1 (by week 2): Preflections 1 & 2 – 10%
- Assignment 2 (by week 7): Project Proposal – 25%
- Assignment 3 (by week 15): Report back and final presentation – 40%

Grading criteria

While grading is assessed on an individual basis, grades for Assignments 2 & 3 are based on performance of the entire group. The overall grade will consider the quality of the final group project, the depth of content understanding demonstrated, and the contributions made to the ongoing process of project realization through collaborations.

Every student should meet or exceed expectations of their own capabilities. But teamwork can be difficult when individual grades are at stake. To the extent possible, specify what each group member will contribute to the final product in the project proposal. If a group member alerts me to a problem in the group that cannot be resolved, I will ask each group member to grade every other group member. As a result, each group member's project grade will then be computed as follows:

$$((\text{sum of group member grades} / \text{number of group members}) + (\text{professor group grade})) / 2$$

Everyone will be working in a team with no exceptions. Recognizing that this is a working, rather than a personal relationship, it is expected that team members will find ways to negotiate and cooperate should disagreements occur. There will be two peer evaluations as part of ongoing reflection during the project implementation phase. The first is scheduled during week 10 of the semester (Nov 2), or the mid-term of project implementation phase. The second one is scheduled during the last week of the semester.

Reflections and journaling

Connecting personal experiences with external events during service-learning is a proven method of purposeful learning. Reflection is an active process of reviewing an experience either while it is going on or afterwards. Systematically exploring and bringing a sense of inquiry to an experience allows the learning to be surfaced. According to the Center for Reflective Community Practice at MIT, "We can go through an event that is rich in possibilities for learning, but without reflection, the event stays at the level of experience." This course will structure reflections based on 3 categories:

1. Project evolution
2. Practitioner Development
3. Engaging community knowledge

Each week, a set of questions/prompts will be provided on Blackboard for students to submit their reflections. As part of the cycle of experiential learning that starts from concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, a series of structured sessions will allow students to collectively reflect in order to connect with multiple perspectives, understand broader contexts and larger issues, and increase their projects' impact.

Schedule

Week 1: Aug 31 – Introduction, Part 1

What are the significance of neighborhood-level arts and cultural activities to an urban system? What connects the arts to *place*? What ties institutions to its spatial context and constituents? What are the elements of a "district"? What methods can we use to uncover these elements as basis of facilitating positive change? How can an asset-based framework guide us in this process?

Class activities:

- Ice breakers, course overview, student skills assessment

Assignment #1 due: Preflection 1 (MOCA Collections & Research Center or El Museo del Barrio)

Week 2: Sept 7 – Introduction, Part 2

Site visit: Meet at Fourth Arts Block at 12:20 pm, 61 East 4th Street, (212) 228-4670

Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts working group co-directors introduce the mission and activities of NOCD-NY; the framework of working in the arts, culture, and creative manufacturing; discuss the ethics of collaboration with communities, e.g. equitable partnerships. Tour FAB cultural district with special focus on community activism that gave rise to a network of organizations and individuals that make up FAB's constituency.

Required readings:

- Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "Cultivating 'Natural' Cultural Districts," a report of The Reinvestment Fund and Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania (2007).
- Caron Atlas, "Culture and Community Development: Tough Questions, Creative Answers," *Progressive Planning*, No. 165 (Fall 2005): 18-21.
- Tom Borrup, "Culture as Community Connector," *Progressive Planning*, No. 165 (Fall 2005): 15-17.

Recommended readings:

- Joan Byron, "Artists Meet Community Development in the Bronx," *Progressive Planning*, No. 165 (Fall 2005): 13-14.
- Ann Markusen, "Artists as Community Developers," *Progressive Planning*, No. 165 (Fall 2005): 1, 7-9.

Assignment #1 due: Preflection 2 (MOCA Collections & Research Center or El Museo del Barrio)

Week 3: Sept 14 – Project Discovery, East Harlem

Site visit: Meet at lobby of El Museo del Barrio at 12:40 pm, 1230 5th Avenue

Tour of the area surrounding El Museo del Barrio with special focus on neighborhood change, ethnic enclaves, and the museum's outreach activities.

Required readings:

- Julia Foulkes, "Streets and Stages: Urban Renewal and the Arts after World War II," *Journal of Social History* (2010): 413-434.
- Mark Gottdiener, "Minority Settlement Patterns, Neighborhoods, and Communities in the Multicentered Metro Region," in *New Urban Sociology* (Westview Press, 2010).

Recommended reading:

- Karen Chapple, and Shannon Jackson, "Commentary: Arts, Neighborhoods, and Social Practices: Towards an Integrated Epistemology of Community Arts," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29.4 (2010): 478-490.

Reflections due: written reflection on readings + site visit of FAB

Week 4: Sept 21 – Project Discovery, Chinatown

Site visit: Meet at lobby of 70 Mulberry Street at 12:40 pm

Site partners will introduce key institutions that are working in the intersection of arts and community in Chinatown: MOCA, Chen Dance Company, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council.

Required reading:

- Jan Lin, "The Death and Life of Urban Ethnic Places," *Power of Urban Ethnic Places: Cultural Heritage and Community Life* (New York, Routledge, 2011).

Recommended readings:

- Diane Grams and Michael Warr, "Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighborhoods," a research report for The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation (2003).
- Alaka Wali et al., "Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places," Research report to the Chicago Center for Arts Policy, Columbia College (2002).

Reflections due: Field notes/sketches/word diagrams from visit to East Harlem

Week 5: Sept 28 – Project Discovery, Hunts Point

Site visit: Meet at The Point CDC, 940 Garrison Avenue, Bronx, (718) 542-4139

Site partner will introduce multiple sites in which the organization is active, focusing on murals (as public art) and the Riverside Campus for Arts and The Environment.

Required reading:

- Carl Grobach, "Art Spaces in Community and Economic Development: Connections to Neighborhoods, Artists, and the Cultural Economy," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31.1 (2011): 74-85.

Reflections due: Field notes/sketches/word diagrams from visit to Chinatown

Week 6: Oct 5 – Project planning, Part 1

Guests: Victoria Marshall, Parsons SDS; Brita Servaes, Fogelman Library

Tools introduction: Triangulation in Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Process

Class activities:

- Pin-up: sketches and word diagrams by sites
- Group reflections on site visits
- Develop procedures for project plan: e.g. form teams, define issues for each site, develop project statements, identify existing models, tools, and portals that would inform research and design strategies

Required reading:

- Dana Taplin, Suzanne Scheld, Setha Low, "Rapid ethnographic assessment in urban parks: A case study of Independence National Historical Park," *Human Organization* 61.1 (2002): 80-93.

Recommended readings, selections from:

- Randy Stoecker. *Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-based Approach* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005).
- Robert Chambers. *Revolutions in Development Inquiry* (Earthscan, 2008).

Reflections due: Field notes/sketches/word diagrams from visit to Hunts Point

Teamwork assignments for the following week:

- Based on project statement and objectives, draft research and design proposal, timeline, and deliverables, roles and responsibilities

Week 7: Oct 12 – Project planning, Part 2

Guests: NOCD-NY Co-Directors

Class activities:

- Students present proposals to NOCD-NY Co-Directors
- Discuss opportunities and constraints of each site
- Tools introduction: Social Process Triangle (Institute of Cultural Affairs)

Recommended readings:

- John Gaventa, "The Powerful, the Powerless, and the Experts: Knowledge Struggles in an Information Age," in Peter Park, et al. ed., *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).
- Tom Angotti, Cheryl S. Doble, Paula Horrigan ed. *Service-Learning in Design and Planning: Educating at the Boundaries* (Oakland: New Village Press, 2012).

Assignment #2: email Project Proposal by Oct 11, 5pm, so that faculty and NOCD-NY directors could review ahead of class on Friday

Teamwork assignments for the following week:

- Finalize project proposal and all key elements of Assignment #3 (e.g. site analysis, bibliography, design program, etc.)
- Develop baseline data of your project site using ICA's Social Process Triangle

Week 8 to Week 13 (Oct 19 – Nov 23) Project Implementation

Oct 19: Present and discuss data collected under ICA's Social Process Triangle

Oct 26: Teamwork + Desk Crit

Nov 2: Teamwork + Peer evaluation

Nov 9: Teamwork

Nov 16: Teamwork + Desk Crit

Nov 23: No class. Teams should meet in order to prepare for presentation and report back to site partner during the week of Dec 7

Week 14: Dec 7 – Project Feedback

- Report back to site partners

Week 15: Dec 14 – Final Project Presentation

- **Assignment #3 due**
- Guests: faculty members from The New School, NOCD-NY, site partners
- Wrap-up: Group reflection, self-assessment, course evaluation

Class policies

Attendance and Lateness

Since class only meets once a week, 2 absences mandate a reduction of one letter grade for the course. More than 3 absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following:

- an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation);
- a family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation);
- observance of a religious holiday

The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

If you arrive more than 10 minutes late or leave class more than 10 minutes early, lateness will be marked on your record. Three "lates" will be counted as one full absence. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

Academic Honesty

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity. For more information, see

<http://www.newschool.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=81698>

Guidelines for Studio Assignments

Work from other visual sources may be imitated or incorporated into studio work if the fact of imitation or incorporation and the identity of the original source are properly acknowledged. There must be no intent to deceive; the work must make clear that it emulates or comments on the source as a source. Referencing a style or concept in otherwise original work does not constitute plagiarism. The originality of studio work that presents itself as "in the manner of" or as playing with "variations on" a particular source should be evaluated by the individual faculty member in the context of a critique.

Incorporating ready-made materials into studio work as in a collage, synthesized photograph or paste-up is not plagiarism in the educational context. In the commercial world, however, such appropriation is prohibited by copyright laws and may result in legal consequences.

Disability Services

In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course. For further information, see <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/disability-services>